UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/RES/45/126
21 February 1991

Forty-fifth session
Agenda item 102

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/45/758)]

45/126. Women and literacy

The General Assembly,

Recalling that in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1/ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 2/ the inalienable right of every individual to education is recognized,

Recalling also the special references to and recommendations on women's needs in relation to literacy, education and training contained in paragraphs 163 to 173 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, 3/

Taking note of Commission on the Status of Women resolution 34/8 of 8 March 1990 on women and literacy, 4/

1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

2/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

3/ Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, 15-26 July 1985 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.85.IV.10), chap. 1, sect. A.

4/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1990, Supplement No. 5 (E/1990/25), chap. I, sect. C.

Taking note also of Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 of 24 May 1990, the annex to which contains the recommendations and conclusions arising from the first review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, in which, inter alia, it is recommended that Governments should make special efforts to remove all gender-related differences in adult literacy by the year 2000 and that programmes should be established to ensure that parents and teachers provide equal educational opportunities for girls and boys,

Noting that in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 5/ States parties, inter alia, committed themselves to taking measures to ensure equal access to education for women and men,

Recalling its resolutions 42/104 of 7 December 1987, by which it proclaimed 1990 as International Literacy Year, and 44/127 of 15 December 1989, in which it called for continuing international efforts to promote literacy,

Recalling also the World Declaration on Education for All adopted by the World Conference on Education for All, 6/ in which it is recognized that literacy programmes are indispensable to the basic learning needs of all and that the most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for girls and women, as well as to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation,

Mindful of Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/12 of 24 May 1990, in which it recommended that a world conference on women be held in 1995,

Taking note of the Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s, 7/ adopted by the World Summit for Children, held in New York on 29 and 30 September 1990, in which, inter alia, the adoption of measures was called for that emphasized the need to improve the current disparities between girls and boys in access to basic education and the need to reduce adult illiteracy by half, with an emphasis on female illiteracy, before the year 2000,

Mindful of the fact that the eradication of illiteracy, including illiteracy among women, is one of the paramount objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, 8/

5/ Resolution 34/180, annex.

6/ Final Report of the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990, Inter-Agency Commission (UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank) for the World Conference on Education for All, New York, 1990, appendix 1.

7/ See A/45/625, annex.

8/ See resolution 45/199, annex.

Recognizing that in many countries there is a significant gap between enrolment and retention levels of girls and boys in basic education programmes, just as there is a gap in literacy between adult men and women, which denies women of all ages the opportunity to participate fully in national development activities,

Bearing in mind that increased literacy levels have already been directly associated with reduced population growth in many parts of the world and that the promotion of women's literacy is an important element in ensuring the success of national objectives relating to population,

1. Notes with appreciation the commendable work done in connection with International Literacy Year by the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with its Plan of Action for the Eradication of Illiteracy by the Year 2000, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme;

2. Commends those Governments that have launched national programmes aimed at meeting the objectives of the Year;

3. Notes with satisfaction the active involvement of many non-governmental organizations in the Year and, in particular, the establishment of the International Task Force on Literacy;

4. Encourages the Secretary-General and Member States, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to continue to support efforts to increase literacy by:

(a) Improving the educational opportunities for females of all ages, particularly children;

(b) Providing basic education to all without discrimination based on gender and in settings that are accessible and culturally acceptable;

(c) Encouraging the development of gender-specific indicators and measurements for assessing the impact of educational and training efforts in both domestic and international projects and programmes and for assessing the inclusion and participation of women of all ages in those efforts;

5. Encourages Member States to attempt to disaggregate by gender data in such areas as school enrolment, completion, participation and repetition rates;

6. Urges Member States to eliminate de jure and de facto barriers to schooling for women of all ages;

7. Calls upon Member States to give special attention and emphasis to the guidelines and recommendations developed for the Year when implementing measures to eliminate illiteracy;

8. Encourages the Secretary-General, in collaboration with relevant United Nations organizations, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Programme, to assist Member States in strengthening strategies to target resources to women of all ages, especially those most disadvantaged, and thereby work towards the elimination of illiteracy of women of all ages;

9. Calls upon Member States to accelerate the participation of women in literacy programmes, particularly in areas pertaining to the improvement of their socio-economic condition, including legal literacy and income-generating and skill-building activities;

10. Encourages Member States to increase the number of tutors and trainers with the necessary qualifications, to maximize their efforts to reach women and to increase the participation of non-governmental and private volunteer organizations, particularly women's organizations, in the implementation and management of literacy programmes and in policy and programme development;

11. Requests the Secretary-General to prepare for the world conference on women to be held in 1995 a report on the progress to increase female literacy made by Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system;

12. Requests the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to pay particular attention to measures taken by Governments to increase female literacy, particularly by ensuring equal access to basic education for girls and boys;

13. Requests the Secretary-General in his next update to the World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 9/ to examine specifically the relationship between the literacy of women and their economic and social advancement.

68th plenary meeting
14 December 1990

9/ See United Nations publication, Sales No. E.89.IV.2.